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STATEMENTS OF A CONTEMPORARY OF THE EMPEROR JULIAN ON THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

IN his interesting article on *The Emperor Julian and the Jews*, Mr. Michael Adler has also thrown some light upon the remarkable fact, that neither in the Talmud of Jerusalem nor in the other Jewish sources is the undertaking of the Emperor Julian to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem spoken of at all¹. In order to explain this strange silence he refers also to Frankel, who points out in his introduction to the *Talmud of Jerusalem* (p. 26), that the Talmud of Jerusalem was concluded not long after Julian's death. But, in fact, half a century, at least, may be computed from the death of Julian (363) to the time of the conclusion of the Talmud of Jerusalem, and there can be no question whatever about the academical teaching of the Palestinian schools and of their members, especially of the Agadists, as having ceased during this very half century; for the last authorities of Palestine within the time of the Amoras belong to this period, and the last material for the Talmud of Jerusalem was collected within that time, until it was concluded. It was also in this period that the traditions of the Agada were put together in special writings of the Midrash. It was the time of Tanchuma b. Abba, the one teacher of the Agada, after whom a Midrash on the Pentateuch is called; to him may certainly be ascribed its edition in its earliest form. Hence neither the immediate conclusion of the Talmud of Jerusalem, nor the pretended stagnation of the scholastic and literary activity of the Jews of Palestine, can be given as a reason why the sources do not mention at all the plan of the Emperor Julian. We have to look elsewhere for the real cause of this silence, viz. in the fact, that from the beginning the plan had not, in Jewish circles, been generally approved of, and, after it had failed, people would speak about it the less. Grätz (*Geschichte der Juden*, IV², p. 372) says very appropriately: "The restoration of the former splendour was only expected from the appearance of the Messiah; the idea of

¹ JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, V, 625.

a temple without him seemed absurd to the notions of that time, and a Roman Emperor would far less have been considered the Messiah." For this reason alone, the statements of the Syrian legend about the rebellious Emperor, which was written 150 years after Julian's death, must be regarded as unhistorical¹. For it is inconceivable that the Jewish "priests" of Tiberias welcomed Julian as the "king of Israel," in whom "the kingdom of the house of David will shine with brilliant lustre." On the other hand, we cannot imagine that such an undertaking as the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, which must have aroused, in a very great degree, the national sentiments, the historical reminiscences, and the Messianic hopes of the Palestinian Jews, should not have made a deep and lasting impression on some of them, at least; that it should not have called forth in them the idea, that the plan conceived by the mighty Emperor, who was friendly disposed towards the Jews, was at least the beginning of the fulfilment of those aspirations, which were linked to the idea of the final time of the Messiah. Should it not be possible, that the temple was rebuilt before the Messiah came, and the dynasty of David reigned again over Israel? Should the third temple, which will rise, by the will of the Emperor Julian, from the ruins of the second one, not be, at least, equally justified and as much aspired to, as was the second temple after the return from the Babylonian exile, which had also been erected without the restoration of the kingdom of David? I believe I have found, amongst the Palestinian Amoras of that period, one who supports this view, who is friendly disposed towards the undertaking of Julian and defends it. It is R. Acha (אחא), who lived about the middle of the fourth century. He may, without the least difficulty, be regarded as a contemporary of Julian, and as a witness of the attempt to rebuild the temple. Acha, to whom a large chapter will be devoted in the third volume of my *Agada of the Palestinian Amoras*—for he belongs to the more prominent teachers of the *Agada*—came from Lydda, and was one of the more distinguished teachers of Tiberias. On the occasion of a visit which he received, when he was seriously ill, from the two heads of the school, R. Jona and R. Jose, it is narrated that they regarded him as a man of light in Israel (בְּצִינְיָהוּן דִּישְׂרָאֵל). And the following sentence of this R. Acha, which refers to a passage in the Mishna, is cited in the Talmud of Jerusalem, *Maasser sheni*, chap. v, *Halachah* 2, at the end (56a) דוד וזאת אומרת שבית המקדש עתיד להיבנות קודם למלכות בית דוד. "This sentence of the Mishnah"—viz. the statement of Jose ben Chalafta: וְתַנְיָא אִימְתִי שִׁבְנָה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יִחוּר הָדָבָר לְכַמּוֹת שְׁהִיָּה—

¹ See M. Adler, p. 622.

implies that "the temple will, one day, be rebuilt before the kingdom of the house of David is restored." A contemporary of Julian cannot express more clearly his approval of the plan of rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem than is done in this sentence. He has thus proved, so to speak, by the Halacha, from the Mishnah itself, the admissibility of the undertaking. Less clear is the documentary evidence of the Bible, with which the sentence of Acha concludes: **רַכְתִּיב וְדָם עֵנֵב חֲשֵׁתָהּ הָמָר**. I can only offer a suggestion as to how these words of Deut. xxxii. 14 were taken to affirm the thesis that the temple will be rebuilt before the appearance of the Messiah. The words of the text we have quoted, are explained in the corresponding place in Sifrê (§ 317 at the end) in the way that it will not be necessary for Israel to get the wine out of the winepress, but that it will drink it directly out of the berries of the bunch of grapes, as the "blood of the grape" (**שֶׁלֹא תִהְיוּ יַגְעִים לֹא לְדֶרֶךְ וְלֹא**) (**לְבִצּוֹר**). The same meaning of the words of the text is applied by R. Acha to the Messianic hopes in the future and their fulfilment. The great judgment of the nations, out of which the kingdom of the house of David and the reign of the Messiah would come, is given as the great vintage and the treading of the grapes (see Isaiah lxiii, cf. Joel iv. 13). According to Acha these words imply that Israel will drink part of the wine, before it is pressed, still as the "blood of the grapes"; viz. the temple will be rebuilt, before the judgment of the nations has been given and before the Messiah has appeared.

But there is another statement of R. Acha which has apparently the same tendency to defend the plan of Julian. It is his sentence about the five things which have been wanting in the second temple, which sentence is quoted three times in the Talmud of Jerusalem (Taanith, 65 a below; Makkoth, 32 a above; Horajoth, 47 c below). This sentence of Acha has come down to us through Samuel b. Inia (or Ina), and is as follows: **ה' דברים היה המקדש האחרון חסר מן הראשון** **ואלו הן אש וארון ואורים ותומים ושמן המשחה ורוח הקדש**. And very ingeniously he holds, that the missing five attributes of the sanctuary are indicated in a word of Chaggai (i. 8), which speaks of the magnificence of the second temple, viz. in the word **ואֲכַבְדָּהּ**, which is written without a ה, though pronounced with a ה¹. Here and there we find already, in older statements of the Tannaim, the fact

¹ This expression is given anonymously in Shir Hashirim Rabba on 8, 9, and with a few modifications in the enumeration of the five things, but with the same statement of the author (to שמואל בר אימי has to be added אמר ר' אחא, see Rabbinowicz, *ibid.*), also in the Babylonian Talmud, Joma, 21 b.

mentioned, that the said things were missing in the second temple¹. Now Acha puts them together and says that the second temple lacked such essential attributes as were in the first one, viz. the fire on the altar, the ark, the Urim and Tummim, the oil of unction, the holy spirit. Does he not seem to point out, thereby, that a temple was also conceivable without these attributes, which were, partly, connected with the restoration of the house of David? Acha told those who would have nothing to do with the plan of Julian, because the true attributes of the sanctuary, such as the temple of Solomon had them, would be missing in the third temple to be erected on the ruins of the second temple: "Well, these attributes were also wanting even in the second temple, but, nevertheless, it was acknowledged to be of full value and regarded with veneration as the true sanctuary." Perhaps he also told them that, just as the second temple was built by the favour of a non-Jewish ruler (Darius), one should not refuse the favour of the Roman Emperor, who would undertake the building of the third temple. And who knows, but that this very Acha is the author of the interpretation of the words of Daniel (xi. 34) on Julian **יְעֹזֵר עֲזָרָא מִכְּשָׁלָם**, which was, according to Hieronymus, propagated amongst the Jews²?

If I am right in my conjecture, that Acha approved of the rebuilding of the temple, as undertaken by Julian, and that he kept it distinct from the other Messianic aspirations, he was, apparently, anxious to refute expressly, in another sentence, which is also contained in the Talmud of Jerusalem (Nedarim, 38a below), the supposition, that the promised redeemer of Israel had come in Julian. This surmise is ascribed by the Syrian legend of Julian to the official representatives of the Palestinian Jews, and may have originated in the minds of a few who had been misled by the extraordinary occurrences. This is the statement of Acha, which is handed down by a R. Gershom, who is not otherwise known: **דָּרֶךְ כּוֹכֵב מִיַּעֲקֹב מִמִּי דָּרֶךְ כּוֹכֵב וְעֵתִיד לְעֹמֹד מִיַּעֲקֹב**. He thus considers that, in the words of Bileam (Numbers xxiv. 17), a special stress is laid on the fact that the "star," the Messiah, the redeemer of Israel, will only arise from Jacob. From Jacob and not from Esau, viz. not from Rome. For **מִיַּעֲקֹב** can

¹ See Tosifta Joma, 3, 7, Sota, 13, 1, and the Baraitha in Joma, 52b; Horajoth, 12c; Kerithoth, 5b on the Ark and the oil of unction. See Tos. Sota, 13, 2; j. Sota, 24b; b. Joma, 9b, b. Sota, 48b on Urim and Tummim and Holy Spirit.

² The interpretation of another verse in Daniel (ix. 23) by Acha is handed down by the same Samuel b. Inia, who has transmitted Acha's statement about the missing attributes of the temple. See Koheleth Rabba on ix. 7.

only mean, that it also implies the negative **עשו** ; **ולא מעשו**, however, is the well-known appellation of Rome in the Agada.

We may assert with great probability, that the plan of the Emperor Julian is hinted at rather distinctly, at least, in the Talmud of Jerusalem; hence, we cannot refute, without strong counter-evidence, the suggestion, that the name of the Emperor is also mentioned in the Talmud of Jerusalem. And, in fact, it is stated in j. Nedarim, 37 d: **והא לולינוס מלכא כד נחח לתמן נחות עימיה מאה ב' ריבון**. This is a very clear statement about the expedition of Julian against the Persians (**לתמן** = to Babylon). And though in the corresponding passage, j. Shebuoth, 34 d, the name **דוקליטיאנוס** is put in the place of **לולינוס**, nothing can prove that we have to look for the original text in Shebuoth, and not in Nedarim. If Grätz (IV², 492) wishes to alter, in the former passage, **לולינוס** for **דוקליטיאנוס**, we have as much right to surmise the reverse, viz. that, in the second passage, **דוקליטיאנוס** is put by mistake in the place of **לולינוס**. And even with greater justification! For the Emperor Julianus is otherwise not literally mentioned in the Talmud of Jerusalem nor anywhere else, while Diocletianus is named somewhere else, too, and may easily have come from the pen of a transcriber instead of Julianus. Besides, the Persian expedition of Julianus was of greater importance and greater interest, even to the Jews of Palestine, than that of Diocletianus.

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